

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBAN 00299 160649Z
ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBAN 0299

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJ: CHIEF BUTHELEZI: RECENT VIEWS

REF: A. 77 DURBAN 800 B. LONDON 4738

1. SUMMARY: DURING DISCUSSION WITH CONGEN FARBER MAY 10 AT ULUNDI, BUTHELEZI EXPRESSED HIS CURRENT SATISFACTION WITH THE USG'S SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICIES AND INITIATIVES. HE NOTED HIS OWN POSITION WITH THE SAG SEEMED TO HAVE IMPROVED SOMEWHAT SINCE MULDER ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR "PLURAL" AFFAIRS ALTHOUGH HE ENTERTAINED NO EXPECTATION THAT ANY REAL CHANGES WOULD RESULT. BUTHELEZI WAS A BIT MORE REVEALING ABOUT HIS CONCEPT FOR FUTURE BLACK TACTICS TO PROMOTE CHANGE - INDICATING PREPARATIONS WERE UNDERWAY AIMED AT A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF WITHOLDING BLACK LABOR. AT THE SAME TIME HE STRESSED THE ESSENTIALITY OF AVOIDING A "PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT" THROUGH PREMATURE ACTION. BUTHELEZI CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DUBAN 00299 160649Z

DISTORTION OF HIS POSITION IN A MARCH INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE WAS QUOTED AS SEEKING WESTERN ARMS. HIS OTHER STANDARD POSITIONS WERE REITERATED. END SUMMARY.

2. BUTHELEZI, APPEARING RELAXED AND EXPANSIVE ON HIS ULUNDI HOME TURF, INITIATED OUR HOUR'S DISCUSSION WITH AN EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S CURRENT POLICIES

END INITIATIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE EXPRESSED HIS DEEP PERSONAL APPRECIATION FOR EFFORTS BY AMBASSADOR BOWDLER AND

OTHERS TO KEEP HIM IN THE PICTURE ON DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST YEAR.

3. MOST INTERESTING PART OF CONVERSATION DEALT WITH QUESTION OF FUTURE BLACK TACTICS FOR PROMOTING CHANGE THROUGH NON-VIOLENT MEANS. BUTHELEZI HERETOFORE HAS HINTED AT ACTION TO "WITHOLD LABOR" BUT HAS NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING WITH DETAILS OF HIS INTENTIONS (PARA 5, REF A). ON MAY 10 HE REFERRED, AS PREVIOUSLY HE HAS, TO THE 1973 DURBAN STRIKES AND THE IMPACT THEY MADE ON PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AT THE TIME. THE NEXT TIME, BUTHELEZI CONFIDED, THE SCALE WHOULD HAVE TO BE MUCH BROADER THAN DURBAN/NATAL - OTHERWISE THE DESIRED IMPACT COULD NOT BE ACHIEVED. THIS REQUIRED CAREFUL ORGANIZATION INCLUDING GREATER EFFORTS AT LINING UP BLACK SUPPORT IN OTHER AREAS OF S.A. AT THE SAME TIME HE NOTED THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING THAT ANY WITHOLDING OF LABOR OPEATION NOT FAIL BECAUSE OF IN-ADEQUATE BLACK PREPARATIONS TO SUSTAIN THEMSELVES DURING THE DEMONSTRATION PERIOD. THIS, HE SAID, UNDERLAY THE BUTHELEZI/INKATHA EMPHASIS IN RECENT MONTHS ON BLACK SELF-RELIANCE AND SELF-HELP, AND TO THE NEED TO MARSHAL FOOD RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY, (TO ENSURE SURVIVAL DURING A DEMONSTRATION PERIOD). BUTHELEZI MENTIONED IN PASSING THAT WESTERN ASSISTANCE IN THE AREA OF PROVIDING OR ARRANGING FOR FOOD FOR BLACKS COULD ONLY

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PAGE 03 DURBAN 00299 160649Z

HASTEN THE DAY WHEN ACTION WOULD BE POSSIBLE. HE CONCLUDED WITH THE EXPRESSION THAT, ABOVE ALL, HE MUST GUARD AGAINST BLACKS' INCURRING A "PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT" IF THEY UNDERWENT A PROLONGED PERIOD OF WITHOLDING LABOR AND DID NOT OBTAIN THE DESIRED RESULT, WHICH STILL WAS TO PRESSURE THE SAG INTO DISCUSSING BLACK ASPIRATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A NATIONAL CONVENTION.

4. BUTHELEZI SAID HE FOUND THE MINISTER CONNIE MULDER'S RECENT INITIATIVES AND DIALOGUES WITH BLACK LEADERS STRUCK HIM IN TWO WAYS. ON THE ONE HAND HE FOUND HIS PRESENT POSITION WITH THE SAG SOMEWHAT "LESS CONFRONTATIONAL" THANKS TO HIS MEETING WITH MULDER AND THE LATTER'S CORDIAL WORDS BOTH IN CAPE TOWN FEB. 8 AND AT ULUNDI APRIL 18. CERTAINLY THE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN HIM AND THE SAG SEEMED LESS SHARP THAN AFTER THE EXCHANGES WITH MINISTER KRUGER IN SEPTEMBER 1977. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE DID NOT REALLY EXPECT CHANGES FROM MULDER OTHER THAN SOME OF THE COSMETIC VARIETY. BUTHELEZI SAID HE HAD BEEN "EMBARRASSED" BY FAVORABLE MENTION OF HIMSELF ON TWO RECENT OCCASIONS IN THE CAPE TOWN PARLIAMENT. HE FOUND THIS PUZZLING AND INDICATED IT MIGHT NOT BE HELPFUL IN TERMS OF KEEPING HIS POSITION CLEAR WITH BLACKS OUTSIDE NATAL/KWAZULU.

5. SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE (SABA). BUTHELEZI DID NOT SEEM TO EXUDE MUCH ENTHUSIASM WHEN DISCUSSING ACTIVITIES OF SABA (NOW FOCUSSED ON A PUBLIC RALLY TO BE HELD AT DURBAN IN THE NEAR FUTURE). DEVELOPMENT OF SABA WOULD CONTINUE ON A SYSTEMATIC AND LOW-KEY BASIS, HE SAID, AND IT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT ADDITIONAL BLACK GROUPS BE INCLUDED AT THIS TIME. SABA ITSELF WAS NOT SOLICITING FOR ADDITIONAL ADHERENTS, ON THE DUAL BASIS THAT IT WOULD BE UNDULY PROVOCATIVE TO THE SAG AND, IN THE END, IT WAS UP TO INDIVIDUAL BLACK GROUPS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEIR OBJECTIVES ALIGNED WITH THOSE OF SABA.

6. BUTHELEZI SAID HIS POSITION HAD BEEN DISTORTED IN A MARCH 15 INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY ASKED THE WEST TO PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DURBAN 00299 160649Z

ARMS TO THE ANC AND HIMSELF (BBC "NEWSDAY" PROGRAM - REF B). BUTHELEZI SAID HE HAD BEEN HARRASSED BY THE INTERVIEWER INTO GIVING AN OFFHAND REPLY, BUT THAT HIS POSITION ON NON-VIOLENCE REMAINED AS ALWAYS BEFORE AND THAT HE WAS NOT SEEKING ARMS OR GIVING CONSIDERATION TO ARMED ACTIVITY IN PURSUIT OF HIS STATED OBJECTIVES. BUTHELEZI ALSO REPEATED HIS CUSTOMARY LINE OPPOSING (UNLESS AS A FINAL ALTERNATIVE TO BLOOKSHED) ECONOMIC AND OIL SANCTIONS AND WESTERN DIS-INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.
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